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Baker-Polito Administration Designates New Early College Programs

More than \$900,000 in grants awarded to early college programs that will begin in the Fall 2019

BOSTON – Governor Charlie Baker today awarded designation to early college programs at 13 high schools and eight public colleges across the Commonwealth that will enroll thousands of students next fall, giving them opportunities to study in college-level courses and earn credits before they graduate high school.

Governor Baker and Education Secretary James Peyser made the announcement during an event at Bunker Hill Community College, organized to recognize the high schools and colleges that have launched programs designated by the state this school year.

With the new awards, there are 35 high schools and 18 colleges in Massachusetts with designated early college programs. Early college programs combine traditional high school classes with college courses through a local college or university to give students knowledge and exposure to an area of study, while earning up to 12 college credits – equivalent to one semester-- for free. By creating designated early college programs, the Baker-Polito Administration aims to break down barriers between high school and higher education to create a more seamless path for students to move to college and careers.

“Exposing students to early college is a way to create opportunities for students to earn college credits in high school and encourage them to continue pursuing a degree,” **Governor Charlie Baker said**. “We believe early college has such an impact on student success that our administration proposed making it part of a school district’s state aid calculations so that more districts can provide students with these opportunities.”

“Early college gives students experience in college-level work, which builds their confidence in their own ability to succeed,” **Lt. Governor Karyn Polito said**. “It is exciting to see more students enroll in these programs and we are thankful to the teachers and college faculty who are taking on this work.”

The Governor's education funding legislation, [An Act to Promote Equity and Excellence in Education](#), proposed a new enrollment category that will provide additional funding for high schools that implement Early College and Career Pathway programs. The bill - still under consideration by the Legislature - would create a dependable revenue stream as part of a school district's Chapter 70 aid for every student enrolled. Currently there are approximately 2,400 students enrolled in early college and career pathway programs.

"Early College reduces the need for students to take remedial education courses in college by ensuring they are exposed to college-level work before they graduate high school. These programs build competence and confidence in students, making college an achievable reality for many young people across the Commonwealth," **Education Secretary James Peyser said.**

Early college boosts college completion rates for low-income students, minority students, and first-generation college-goers by exposing students to college-level work and different career pathways before they graduate high school. The college courses are designed to fulfill high school graduation requirements and award college credit.

Each program awarded designation was approved by the Commissioners of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Department of Higher Education. Programs received up to \$140,000 in implementation grants.

"We know that approximately 40% of students who enter our public colleges and universities are assessed as underprepared for college coursework, with students of color disproportionately assigned to remedial courses," **said Commissioner of Higher Education Carlos E. Santiago.** "From an equity standpoint, I see early college as one of the best strategies we can implement to increase the number of students who arrive on campus ready to succeed and graduate on time."

"Designated early college programs provide students an opportunity to connect their high school experience to college and their future career," **Elementary and Secondary Education Commissioner Jeffrey C. Riley said.** "I hope these opportunities will prepare and encourage more students to enroll in and persist through college."

In 2017, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Board of Higher Education agreed on criteria to enable programs to become designated early college programs. Through the designation process, the Departments of Higher Education and Elementary and Secondary Education ask K-12 schools, community colleges and state universities to jointly design models.

There are five design principles for a designated early college program:

- Equitable access for all students
- Guided academic pathways
- Enhanced student supports
- Relevant connection to career
- Deep partnerships between high schools, community colleges and state universities

The following high schools and college and universities partnered together to launch the newly designated programs announced today:

Madison Park Technical Vocational High School with Bunker Hill Community College – Madison Park and Bunker Hill faculty worked together to develop 9th and 10th grade math and English curriculum that will encourage a college-going culture. Starting in fall 2019, all 10th grade students will take a “Bridge to College” course, which is a college exploration and readiness curriculum. Students will enroll in college courses in 10th grade and most early college students will begin taking at least two college courses per semester at Bunker Hill Community College. Students can choose courses in health science, business and marketing, technology; creative economies and the arts and culinary and hospitality. School leaders aim to increase the size of the program to one-third of all Madison Park students in grades 10 through 12.

Fitchburg High School, Leominster High, Gardner High School and Sizer School with Fitchburg State University and Mount Wachusett Community College – Fitchburg State University and Mount Wachusett Community College are collaborating with four high schools in the region to launch the “North Central Massachusetts Early College Academy.” Students will have the option to take courses at both campuses. Students in 9th and 10th grade will take career exploration and college preparation courses before they officially enroll in the North Central Massachusetts Early College Academy at the end of 10th grade. Students will be able to choose pathways in liberal arts, healthcare, nursing, business, industrial technology and business. School officials project more than 350 students will be enrolled by the 20-21 school year.

Framingham High School and Milford High School with Framingham State University and MassBay Community College – Known as the MetroWest Scholars program, this early college program will engage students as early as middle school to instill a college-going mentality among students, particularly minority students who tend to be underrepresented in higher education. This program will overlap with the 100 Males to College program in Framingham and includes a defined pathway for students from 9th to 12th grade. Students in 9th and 10th grades will participate in college and career awareness courses, followed by advising and counseling to support students in choosing a pathway in 11th and 12th grade. Students will take courses in business management, education, sociology and criminal justice, and STEM. School officials expect to have more than 120 students enrolled by the 20-21 school year.

Haverhill High School with Northern Essex Community College – Students will be exposed to early college options in the 9th grade through college and career workshops. All 10th grade students will be enrolled in the Northern Essex Community College First Year Seminar course offered at Haverhill High School. Students will then choose to enroll in college courses on the NECC campus in 11th and 12th grade, deciding on pathways in liberal arts, business, healthcare, education, social services, criminal justice and STEM. School officials expect more than 100 students to be enrolled by 2021.

Lynn Public Schools with North Shore Community College – Students at Lynn Classical High School, Lynn English High School, Lynn Vocational Technical Institute and Fecteau Leary Alternative High School will be able to take college courses at the high school, on the North Shore Community College campus and online. The three learning options will expose more students to the early college experience. Students will start earning college credits in the 9th grade and be able to complete their first-year college courses in both English and Math, as well as additional general education courses and other introductory courses aligned with their MyCap career plans.

Marlborough High School with Quinsigamond Community College – Marlborough High students will be exposed to early college options in 9th and 10th grade and will decide in 10th grade if they wish to pursue the early college pathway. Students in 9th and 10th grades will be enrolled in honors level classes in math, English Language Arts, history and science, with academic supports built-in to ensure success and readiness for taking college-level courses. In 10th grade, students ready for college-level work will be placed in credit-bearing courses taken at the high school. Students can choose courses in English Composition, Introduction to Psychology and Introductory Sociology Principles. Marlborough High School will still offer its STEM pathways in computer science, biotechnology, healthcare, and engineering. School officials estimate there will more than 150 students enrolled by 2020-2021 school year.

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